7.10 Self-Report Techniques: Questionnaire and Interview Design: 30-minute Pack

AQA 7182 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Suggest an improvement to this closed questionnaire item used to measure sleep hygiene: "Do you avoid using screens before bed? Yes/No". Explain why your improvement is better for measuring sleep-related behaviour.

(Total for Question 1 is 8 marks)

2 Give two ways questionnaire designers use filler questions in a survey about alcohol use among university students, and explain briefly why each way is useful in reducing bias or improving data quality.

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

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3 Outline two strengths of structured interviews compared with unstructured interviews when collecting data on job satisfaction from a workplace sample.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

4 A psychology team plans to survey 200 first-year university students about study stress using a mixture of closed Likert items and a final open question. They are worried about social desirability bias affecting responses about coping strategies. Identify three design features they could include in their questionnaire to reduce social desirability bias, and explain how each feature would help.

(Total for Question 4 is 6 marks)

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Mark scheme · 7.10 Self-Report Techniques: Questionnaire and Interview Design: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies an improvement: change to a frequency Likert-style item, e.g. 'How often do you use screens in the hour before bedtime?' with options Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always — **M1**

explains that frequency gives more nuanced ordinal data that distinguishes occasional from habitual behaviour oe — **A1**

identifies a second improvement: define 'screens' and 'before bed' or specify a time window to avoid ambiguity, e.g. 'smartphone, tablet or laptop in the 60 minutes before getting into bed' — **M1**

explains that clear operationalisation reduces respondent interpretation variance and increases reliability oe — **A1**

identifies a third improvement: include a follow-up open item asking what activities are done on screens, e.g. social media, studying, watching videos — **M1**

explains that this captures qualitative context which may moderate sleep effects and improves content validity oe — **A1**

identifies a final improvement: include a neutral lead-in and place the item among filler questions to reduce demand characteristics — **M1**

explains that masking the survey purpose reduces biased over- or under-reporting and improves honesty oe — **A1**

Answer: Improvements: use a frequency scale such as 'How often do you use screens in the 60 minutes before bed? Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always' to get nuanced ordinal data; define what counts as 'screens' and specify the time window to avoid ambiguity; add a short open follow-up asking what activities are done on screens to capture context; and place the item among filler questions or use a neutral lead-in to reduce demand characteristics. These changes increase reliability, validity and reduce biased responding.

Question 2

gives one use of filler questions, e.g. placing neutral questions about general leisure activities among sensitive alcohol questions to mask the survey's focus — **M1**

explains why: it reduces demand characteristics and social desirability bias by making the purpose less obvious, so responses to sensitive items are more honest — **A1**

gives a second use, e.g. including simple demographic or easy behavioural questions to break up long sections and maintain engagement — **B1**

Answer: One use: insert neutral questions about general leisure activities among alcohol items to mask the study aim, reducing social desirability and demand characteristics. Second use: include simple demographic or easy behavioural items to maintain engagement and reduce dropout, improving data completeness.

Question 3

first strength: structured interviews give standardised questions, improving reliability and comparability across respondents oe — **M1**

explains why this matters: responses can be compared and analysed statistically, reducing interviewer variability oe — **A1**

second strength: structured interviews are quicker and easier to administer and code than unstructured interviews oe — **M1**

explains why this matters: larger samples can be collected and data entry is simpler, increasing practicality and reducing cost oe — **A1**

Answer: Structured interviews provide standardised questions improving reliability and comparability, and they are quicker and easier to administer and code, making larger samples more practical.

Question 4

identifies one design feature, e.g. assuring anonymity/confidentiality and explaining it clearly on the questionnaire — **M1**

explains how it helps: reduces motivation to present oneself favourably because answers cannot be linked to identity, improving honesty oe — **A1**

identifies a second design feature, e.g. using indirect questioning or third-person wording for sensitive items, e.g. 'How often do students like you...' rather than 'How often do you...' — **M1**

explains how it helps: reduces perceived personal threat and allows respondents to project behaviour onto a group, increasing candour oe — **A1**

identifies an additional feature, e.g. including validated social desirability scales or embedding filler items to mask the sensitive focus — **M1**

explains how it helps: allows researchers to detect and correct for desirability bias or to make the survey purpose less obvious, improving data quality oe — **A1**

Answer: Assure and explain anonymity to reduce pressure to answer in a socially desirable way. Use indirect or third-person wording for sensitive items to make responses less personal. Optionally include a brief social desirability scale or filler items to detect or mask biased responding, allowing adjustment in analysis.

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